

Remarks

Claims 1-5, 9-11, 15-17, 24-32 and 36 were previously pending and stand rejected as unpatentable under 35 USC §103(a). No claims have been amended. No new matter has been added. Applicants assert that the currently pending claims are in condition for allowance as set forth more fully below.

103 Rejections

Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over **Coppage** (US Pat. 6,741,687) in view of Layborn (US Pat. 6,480,710). Claims 9-11, 24-29 and 36 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Layborn in view of Suryanarayana (US Pat. 6,487,401) and further in view of **Coppage**. Claims 15 and 30 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Raith (US Pat. 6,493,547) in view of Adams (US Pat. 6,181,785) and further in view of **Coppage**. Claims 6-17 and 31-32 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Raith in view of Adams and further in view of **Coppage** and Suryanarayana. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Applicants respectfully note that the filing date of the present application is August 09, 2001. The filing date of Coppage was March 4, 2002 and its issue date was May 25, 2004. As such the filing date of the present application predates the filing date of Coppage by six months and therefore the Coppage reference is not prior art under 35 USC §102. Because the Coppage reference was relied upon by the office action as a new ground of rejection for all claims, and the Coppage reference does not qualify as prior art, then the rejection against all of the outstanding claims must fail and the rejections must be withdrawn.

Thus, Applicants assert that the claims are allowable over the present rejections for at least these reasons. Applicants reserve the right to make future arguments in favor of patentability over the current rejections should such become necessary.

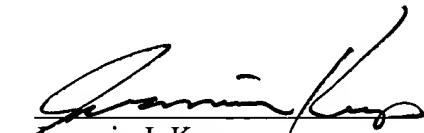
Conclusion

Applicants assert that the application including claims 1-5, 9-11, 15-17, 24-32 and 36 is now in condition for allowance. Applicants request reconsideration in view of the

remarks and further request that a Notice of Allowability be provided. Should the Examiner have any questions, please contact the undersigned.

No fees are believed due. However, please charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-3025.

Respectfully submitted,



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